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Environmental Management Quarterly Update

http://www.doeal.gov/oepm/oepm.htm

We Welcome Your Suggestions!!

Please provide your suggestions, questions, or comments regarding DOE AL's *Environmental Management Quarterly Update* to Gaeton Falance, Office of Environmental Operations and Services, AL, at (505) 845-5636 or (505) 845-6286 (fax) or by e-mail at GFALANCE@DOEAL.GOV.

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Offsite Source Recovery Project

Public Law (PL) 99-240, *The Low-Level Radioactive Waste Policy Amendments Act of 1985,* established the DOE's responsibility for disposal of commercial low-level radioactive waste (LLW) exceeding Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) limits for Class-C LLW (also know as Greater than Class C waste, or GTCC). The Offsite Source Recovery (OSR) Project's primary focus is to manage a single type of GTCC, consisting of radioactive sealed sources. Since the 1950s, various forms of sealed sources have been widely used in the commercial, academic, medical, and government sectors. An estimated 18,000 sealed sources are obsolete, or will become excess and unwanted, by 2010. Many are abandoned or uncontrolled. There is no legal option for disposing of the GTCC sealed sources. These sealed sources are highly radioactive and can cause substantial radiation exposure to people if handled improperly. Some sealed source custodians are no longer NRC-licensed and/or can no longer properly maintain sealed sources in their possession.

The OSR Project's purpose is partially to fulfill DOE's PL 99-240 responsibilities by recovering the backlog of unwanted GTCC sealed sources. Through an agreement with the NRC, DOE Albuquerque Operations Office (AL) and Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) have recovered individual sealed sources based upon emergency requests since 1993. Starting in December 2000, however, the project

238-Plutonium ARCO Nuclear Pacemaker

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Pantex Plant Environmental Restoration Program

Much progress has been made at the Pantex Plant site. An expansion of the perched aquifer treatment system was placed into operation, which has increased the capacity and efficiency of recovery and treatment of contaminants (high explosives and chromium), in the groundwater on the southeast portion of the site. Efforts continued on the development and evaluation of innovative technologies to treat the contaminants in-situ (i.e. without removing from the ground).

Pantex has taken an aggressive approach to delineating the source of the TCE discovered in the Ogallala aquifer in 2000; soil gas investigation of the burning grounds area was conducted and two additional potential sources of contamination have been identified as a result. Additional characterization is being

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Pantex ER Program

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planned for 2001.

Concurrently, a new low flow sampling technology has been implemented to obtain more representative samples of organic contaminants present in low concentrations in the groundwater sampling program at the site.

Ditches and Playas Soil Sampling

In an effort to expedite site cleanup, three proposals were submitted to DOE Headquarters for support to implement interim innovative technologies with respect to contaminant sources and contaminants in groundwater during the 2002 fiscal year.

In terms of regulatory progress, Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) approved 40 release site closures. Additionally, the contract for the fieldwork on the Miscellaneous Chemical Spills Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Facility Investigation has been awarded. This fieldwork is based on comments received from TNRCC.

Finally, Babcox and Wilcox XT (BWXT) was selected as the new M&O contractor for the site. There will be no negative impact on environmental cleanup during this transition to the new M&O contractor.

DOE Grand Junction Office Recent Developments

On December 4, 2000, the DOE Grand Junction Office (GJO) hosted a visit by Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson and Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management Dr. Carolyn Huntoon. This was the first time in recent history that a Secretary of Energy has visited the GJO.

Richardson and Knute Knudson, Chair of the community-based nonprofit Riverview Technology Corporation, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to transfer ownership of the site from DOE to the Grand Junction community. Richardson presented an oversized "key to the site" to Knudson at the ceremony.

"The Department will save an average of $1.3 million annually in landlord costs, and the Riverview Technology Corporation will have the land and office space it needs to further local economic development in Mesa County"

Before the deed can be transferred in mid-February 2001, the Governor of Colorado, Bill Owens must sign a Covenant Deferral, which is required when contamination is left on a federal site that is being transferred to a nonfederal entity. Included in the negotiations was the agreement that DOE would lease back space from the Riverview Technology Corporation so that it could continue its functions uninterrupted.

Speaking before a crowd of approximately 180, Richardson summarized the history of the GJO site. He also talked about the positive impact he hoped the transfer of the site would have on the Grand Junction community. "The department will save an average of $1.3 million annually in landlord costs, and the Riverview Technology Corporation will have the land and office space it needs to further local economic development in Mesa County," said Richardson.

Richardson assured the audience that the critical missions the GJO performs will continue and that DOE will have a strong presence at the Grand Junction site for years to come. "You're doing a good job and the important work you're doing will be recognized," he said. One of those critical missions is the recent assignment to GJO of the uranium mill tailings cleanup work at the Moab Site in Utah, one of Richardson's initiatives and directed by recent federal legislation. He said, "This cleanup will ensure the safety of drinking water not only in Utah, but also in other western states."

Donna Bergman-Tabbert, DOE–GJO Manager, emceed the signing event, and numerous dignitaries made remarks at the ceremony. Dr. Huntoon commended GJO for its accomplishments, including the reduction of mortgage costs that will result from the site transfer. She said DOE would continue to rely on GJO as the "world's expert" in ground-water monitoring. Knudson called the agreement a true "win-win" for everyone: DOE, the American taxpayers, the City

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Budget Status

The FY 2001 Congressional appropriations are close to the request level for the DOE complex. AL has received an allocation of $193.1M after all the congressional and HQ adjustments and the Safeguards and Security reductions. The language removed funding for the Moab site from the request but requested specific work be completed. A reprogramming effort has begun to move some funding to assure successful completion of these activities.

During May 2000, EM Headquarters and the field offices made decisions to support the FY 2002 budgets at a $7B request level. Within the $7B request, AL's budget target is $205M (including $10M for the Moab site) with an overtarget amount of $35M submitted to DOE Headquarters. Because there is a new administration, the budget is currently being updated to reflect current schedules so the administration will know what it is working with.

Final updates will occur with the President's budget being submitted to Congress April 6, 2001.

		FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002 Target
DEFENSE				
Post 2006 Completion				
AL004	New Mexico Agreement in Principle	1,343	1,080	
AL008	Nuclear Material Facility Stabilization	10,920	9,629	
AL009	LANL Environmental Restoration	57,991	46,900	
AL013	LANL WM Legacy Waste	18,805	24,137	
AL026	Off-site Recovery	1,531	1,733	
AL028	Albuquerque Nuclear Material Stewardship Project	2,004	1,952	
AL030	Land Parcels Transfer at LANL	-	4,122	
	Total Post 2006 Completion	92,594	89,553	
Site Project Completion				
AL-002	AL Miscellaneous Programs	7,075	7,003	
AL-003	South Valley Superfund Site	75	1,998	
AL-007	ER, Kansas City	2,046	3,391	
AL-014	Pantex Plant Site Remediation Project	13,694	13,368	
AL-018	Sandia ER Project	24,771	31,642	
AL-019	Pinellas Plant Close Out/Admin.	498	3,983	
AL-021	Maxey Flats Field Mgt. Project	1,200	1,168	
AL-025	Pinellas STAR Center ER Project	2,283	3,331	
AL033	State of Missouri-Agreement in Principle	150	150	
	Total Site Project Completion	51,792	66,034	
	Total Defense	**144,386**	**155,587**	
NON-DEFENSE				
Post 2006 Completion				
AL-032	Off-site Source Recovery	5,334	3,850	
AL-031	Long-Term Surveillance & Maint. Program	-	5,052	
	Total Post 2006	5,334	8,902	
Site Project Completion				
AL-005	Lovelace Respiratory Research Institute	537	561	
AL-034	Atlas Moab Site	-	-	
	Total Site Project Completion	537	561	
Site Closure				
AL-020	Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action Surface	2,956	-	
AL-022	Monticello Projects	21,969	9,067	
AL-023	Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action Groundwater	12,192	13,252	
AL-024	Grand Junction Office All Other Projects	7,372	5,753	
	Total Site Closure	44,489	28,072	
	Total Non-Defense	**50,360**	**37,535**	
	TOTAL ALBUQUERQUE	**194,746**	**193,122**	**205,022**

Transuranic Waste Inspectable Storage Project (TWISP)

In 1993 the Department of Energy (DOE) and Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) were issued a compliance order to safely retrieve Transuranic (TRU)/TRU mixed waste currently stored in above grades asphalt pads under earthen cover and place into an inspectable safe storage configuration by December 8, 2003. A TRU Waste Inspectable Storage Project (TWISP) team was organized in early FY95.

In October 2000, LANL began retrieval of the last remaining pad. By applying best management practices, effective communications and teaming, the TWISP is approximately one year ahead of schedule at an anticipated 20 percent cost savings compared to the original project baseline. The project has implemented a successful waste minimization program and reduced the low-level waste generation by 95 percent.

Transuranic Waste Inspectable Storage Project

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of Grand Junction, and Mesa County. GJO site employees were invited to attend the ceremony and reception that followed.

In a recent development, Assistant Secretary Huntoon made the determination to transfer the Grand Junction Office from the Albuquerque Operations Office (AL) to the Idaho Operations Office (ID). This transfer was effective as of January 19, 2001.

AL is a National Nuclear Security Administration Office as of early last year. Most, if not all, of the Office of Environmental Management (EM) work remaining at AL is directly tied to Defense Programs sites (Los Alamos, Pantex, etc), or is a national program (Nuclear Materials Stewardship, National Transportation, etc) that serves multiple customers (principally EM and DP). Additionally, approximately a year ago, ID was given the mission of leading all research and development efforts associated with long term stewardship, as well as the lead National Laboratory for the Office of EM. Those facts and the proximity to Idaho is why ID was the right choice for managing GJO.

Grand Junction first became part of AL in 1992 at a time when a significant amount of cleanup work associated with the Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action (UMTRA) Project was being conducted in that region. Since UMTRA was managed out of Albuquerque, and Monticello was similar to UMTRA, it was realized there was a very close relationship between the work conducted by both offices. Over the years, UMTRA long term surveillance and maintenance and groundwater management was transferred to Grand Junction because it was centrally located and having one office focused solely on the important challenge of post closure management would be beneficial.

AL and OEOS would like to express their gratitude and appreciation for all the significant achievements GJO has made over the years while under AL.

South Valley Superfund Site Status

"The soil has been remediated and the groundwater is in steady state pump and treat status."

The South Valley Superfund Site (SVSS) consists of an area of approximately one square mile located a few miles south of downtown Albuquerque. The General Electric Plant 83 Facility, a manufacturing facility that was owned from 1951-1967 by the Atomic Energy Commission, is located within the SVSS.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) listed the SVSS on the National Priority List in September of 1983. In 1988, the EPA signed a Record of Decision directing the method of remediation for groundwater and soil contamination for the SVSS. The Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs) identified by the EPA were DOE, the Air Force (which also owned the plant) and General Electric (which operated the plant for the Air Force and currently owns the plant). The soil has been remediated and the groundwater is in steady state pump and treat status, wherein the groundwater is extracted, treated to regulatory limits and reinjected into the aquifer.

In November of 1999, the State of New Mexico sued DOE, the other SVSS PRPs, and several other companies for natural resource damages. DOE is working with the Department of Justice, which represents the interests of the United States in the case.

Mixed Waste Landfill Project – Sandia National Laboratories

The Mixed Waste Landfill (MWL) is a 2.6-acre burial site located in Technical Area 3 of Sandia National Laboratories/New Mexico (SNL). Technical Area 3 is a remote area about five miles south of the Albuquerque City limits and about two miles east of the proposed Mesa del Sol development. The MWL accepted containerized and uncontainerized low-level radioactive mixed waste (waste containing both radioactive and hazardous constituents) from SNL research facilities and off site generators from 1959 to 1988.

The New Mexico Environment Department, (NMED) as the lead regulatory agency, will oversee closure of the MWL. Based on the DOE/SNL characterization efforts, a proposed remedy of placing an engineered cover over the MWL combined with continued extensive monitoring of the groundwater, vadose zone, and engineered cover, has been formally proposed to NMED. In this regard, an alternative engineered cover to the standard RCRA cap has been proposed. This alternative engineered cover will form a more effective and durable barrier than the standard RCRA cap. NMED is currently reviewing the DOE/SNL proposal.

Recently, a few concerned citizens have been questioning the DOE/SNL proposed remedy of placing an engineered cover on the MWL, monitoring the groundwater and the engineered cover, as well as the vadose zone (the area between the ground-surface landfill and the groundwater). NMED conducted two public meetings, one on January 23 and one on January 25, 2001, to discuss MWL issues. DOE/SNL will continue to work with NMED to determine an acceptable remedy for the MWL. DOE/SNL will also continue to work with the public to provide information on the MWL and answer citizen's questions in a variety of forums including public meetings, workshops and through the media.

Mixed Waste Landfill

Offsite Source Recovery Project

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began routine sealed source recoveries under the project priority of recovering as many unwanted GTCC sealed sources as possible.

AL completed a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) determination in October 2000 to establish storage capability for sealed sources at LANL. In December 2000, LANL staff deployed its first routine sealed source recovery team to package 61 238Pu pacemakers at a medical firm in Pennsylvania. The pacemakers were packed into 13 multi-function drums and shipped for storage at LANL's Technical Area-54. Another 610 238Pu items were packaged for shipping from facilities in Minneapolis and Chicago in January 2001. Further recoveries are slated for February and March, which will result in a total of over 1,500 unwanted radioactive sealed sources being removed from the public domain.

Future OSR Project activities include expanding recovery and storage activities to include 239Pu and 241Am sources. These activities are subject to completion of safeguards reviews for storing material at LANL. Additionally, AL is supporting DOE Headquarters in preparing a NEPA assessment to select a site for interim storage of large non-actinide sealed sources. These sources are known as radioisotope thermoelectric generators (RTGs), and were used in various applications where small but reliable electric power supplies were required in remote locations.

For more information about the OSR Project, visit the new DOE OSR Project website at http://www.doeal.gov/wmd/OSRP/OSRP.htm, or the companion LANL project website at http://osrp.lanl.gov/.

"Through an agreement with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, DOE Albuquerque and LANL have recovered individual sealed sources based upon emergency requests since 1993."

http://www.doeal.gov/oepm/oepm.htm

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Albuquerque Operations Office
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Upcoming Events

Northern New Mexico Citizen's Advisory Board Meetings

March 28: Joseph Montoya Building, Northern New Mexico Community College, Española, NM.

April 24: New Mexico Highlands University, Las Vegas, NM.

For more information contact Ann Dubois, Coordinator, (505/989-1662)

Pantex Citizen's Advisory Board Meetings

March 27: Amarillo College Technical Center, Room 9, James Bird Administration Building, Amarillo, TX.

April 24: West Texas A&M University , Room 11, Jack B. Kelley Student Center, Canyon, TX.

For more information contact Becky Lopez, (806/372-3311)

Stakeholder Roundtable Meeting

In the September 2000 *Environmental Management Quarterly Update* we announced our intent to hold a stakeholders meeting in calendar year 2001. The exact timing of this meeting is dependent on finalization of the President's FY 2002 budget and AL gaining a reasonable understanding of scope increases at Sandia National Laboratories/New Mexico and the Pantex Plant. The results of the scope review will provide a better understanding of the programmatic challenges, the schedules for completing the cleanup and both short– and long-term costs associated with cleanup. It will also permit us to have a more meaningful dialogue on the AL EM Program at the next stakeholder meeting. At this time, we expect to hold the meeting in June or July and will be in touch with stakeholders in early May regarding the schedule.